



# City of Quincy, Massachusetts

OFFICE OF THE COUNCIL

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Christine Hopps  
DEP Waterways Regulation Program  
1 Winter Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Ms. Hopps,

I hope this letter finds you doing well. I'm writing to you as the City Councillor for Ward 6 in the city of Quincy, regarding the ***Chapter 91 Waterways License Application #W19-5439 – the Authorization of Existing Substructure and Improvements thereto and Superstructure Replacement of the Long Island Bridge***. I appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on this application and explain why it should be denied.

As the Councillor representing the Squantum neighborhood of Quincy, which would experience severe and unfair negative impacts if this project were to proceed, I've closely watched this process unfold. Boston's plan to rebuild Long Island Bridge is ill-conceived, rushed, and poorly executed from the start, with too many pending legal matters to move forward at this time.

The Quincy Conservation Commission rejected the proposal for a new bridge, based on a lack of information provided by Boston, as well as serious engineering and structural flaws that Boston ignored. Boston's Conservation Commission approved the project with very little discussion, and both decisions have been appealed as one case to DEP. Whatever the outcome in this matter, the losing party will appeal the decision first with DEP and then likely through Superior Court. The Quincy Conservation Commission's decision also reflected our own local ordinances guiding activities conducted in wetlands, and this decision has been appealed by Boston in Superior Court.

Boston has dramatically understated the environmental impact the building of a new bridge would have, claiming that the existing bridge abutments can be used to support a new bridge deck. This would disturb the fragile ecosystem of the ocean floor and coastal wetlands, which are under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission. There is also substantial scientific data showing the significantly deteriorated condition of the abutments, as well as expert analysis demonstrating that a bridge build on these existing abutments is very likely to be structurally unsound and dangerous.

Under MEPA, state authorities ruled that the bridge project does not need to go through a rigorous environmental impact review – a decision that Quincy has appealed to Superior Court. This is due once again to the fact that Boston has dramatically understated the potential impacts of this project, and has provided little to no details on any planned future construction and use of Long Island or the surrounding environment. The environmental impact review would shed more light on alternative means of transportation to Long Island, specifically water ferry service, which could be provided at a fraction of the cost and without the major traffic and safety impacts on the Squantum neighborhood.

Many other questions still remain, including concerns regarding the preservation of the island's historical attributes. In 1676 the government of the Massachusetts Bay Colony used Long Island as a concentration camp for Indians; the impact construction would have on that soil is of great concern to contemporary United States Indian tribes, as it constitutes a Native American burial ground.

As City Councillor for Ward 6, my concern is for the people of Squantum and the fact that there has been no opportunity for the public to have a role in this process. Our roads in Squantum are not conducive to the additional traffic construction and implementation of a new bridge would cause, placing undue burden on our residents and resulting in increased congestion, which raises public safety and public health concerns that Boston has not explored nor factored into their plan.

With all of the engineering, environmental, and structural concerns noted in this letter, I believe it is clear that the state has no basis to issue this permit at this time. It is simply too premature in the process, and too many questions remain for this issue to be reviewed sufficiently.

Please consider this letter not only testimony for the denial of this Waterways License, but also a supplement to Quincy Mayor Thomas Koch's request for a public hearing on Boston's application.

Once again, I appreciate the opportunity to submit these comments, and appreciate your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "William P. Harris", written in a cursive style.

William P. Harris

Quincy City Councillor – Ward 6